

Application No. 10/049,803  
Amendment Dated March 18, 2005  
Reply to Office Action dated February 23, 2005

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-28, 32-57, 59-63, 65-67, 69-88, 90-108, 110-127, 133-163 and 165-179 are pending.

Claims 29-31, 58, 64, 68, 89, 109, 128-132 and 164 were cancelled by previous amendment.

Claims 1-28, 32-57, 59-62, 76-88, 90-108, 110-127, 137, 141-157, 159-163, 166-172, 175-177 and 179 are hereby cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 63, 133, 139, 140, 158, 165 and 178 have been amended.

Claim 180 has been added.

Claims 63, 65-67, 69-75, 133-136, 138-140, 158, 165, 173-174, 178 and 180 are hereby submitted for reconsideration.

No new matter has been added.

Applicants extend their appreciation for the courtesy provided by the Examiner during the telephonic interview of March 17, 2005. The present amendment is being forwarded based on the interview and the Examiner's indication that the references on record do not teach or suggest the claims as amended.

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that claim 132

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was inadvertently omitted from the listing of claims in the Preliminary Amendment dated September 10, 2004. Applicants confirm that the Examiner is correct in noting that claim 132 was intended to be cancelled in the previous Preliminary Amendment. Applicants have corrected the present listing of claims using the proper claim status identifier to correctly reflect that claim 132 is cancelled.

Also, in paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner notes that the listing of claims as filed in the September 10, 2004 Preliminary Amendment included incorrectly numbered claims 179 and 180, improperly skipping claim number 178. Applicants have amended the number of these claims according from claim "179" to claim "178" and from claim "180" to claim "179." Additionally, Applicants note that re-numbered claim 179 has been cancelled, but the numbering is shown as amended in order to reflect the complete claim set in the listing of claims.

In paragraphs 3 - 13 of the Office Action, the Examiner notes that the application has been divided into 5 patentably distinct species. Group I, including claims 1-24, 153, 154, 167-169, 171 and 172, is drawn to a closing prompt module classified in class 379, subclass 88.22. Group II, including claims 25-28, 32-37, 76-88, 90-92, 93-96, 141-150, 155, 159, 160 and 166, is drawn to a database clean up classified in class 379, subclass 88.12. Group III, including claims 38-49, 97-108, 110-116, 151, 156, 161, 170 and 175-177, is drawn to a dial string translator classified in class 379, subclass 386. Group IV, including claims 50-57, 59-62, 117-122, 123-127, 152, 157, 162 and 163, is drawn to a billing record

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classified in class 379, subclass 114.01. Group V, including claims 63, 65-67, 69-75, 133-140, 158, 165, 173-174 and 178-179, is drawn to a listing database with a connect field classified in class 379, subclass 201.01.

In paragraph 12 of the Office Action, the Examiner notes that group V was elected in a telephone interview with Joe Sofer on February 10, 2005. Applicants hereby confirm this election in writing as requested by the Examiner. Applicants have cancelled the claims directed to the non-selected groups and have prepared and filed divisional applications for their further consideration.

Turning to the substantive rejections, in paragraph 16 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 63, 65-67, 158 and 178 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Daudelin (U.S. Patent No. 4,959,855). Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's contention and submit the following remarks in response. Immediately, below, Applicants address the rejections specific to independent claims 63 and 158. The rejection of claim 178 is addressed later in the remarks section.

**35 U.S.C. § 102 Claims 63 and 158**

The present invention as claimed in independent claim 63 is directed to a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers. The system includes a telephone switch for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access the information corresponding to subscribers.

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A listing database is configured to store the information corresponding to each of the subscribers, including a field containing wireless phone numbers of a desired portion of the subscribers and a connect field that stores information instructing the communication assistance system as to whether to mask the subscriber's wireless phone number to the requester.

During a process that the requester is being connected to a desired subscriber, the connect field is examined to determine whether to disclose the subscriber's wireless phone number to the requester. A call center is coupled to the switch for routing each of the received calls from the requester to an operator terminal that has access to the database listing table, where the connect field further maintains information instructing the communication assistance system as to whether or not to mask the subscriber's wireless phone number to a customer representative who is handling a request from a requester. Independent method claim 158 contains elements relating to features described above in reference to independent claim 63.

In this arrangement, the present invention provides a means for storing the wireless numbers of subscribers along with an associated status that indicates to the system whether or not a listed wireless number is to be disclosed to the requester when connecting the requester to the subscriber. Furthermore, the invention as claimed also includes a status that indicates if the listed wireless number of the subscriber is also masked to the customer service representative during the connection process as well.

In the Office Action, regarding claims 63 and 158 the Examiner has cited to

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Daudelin reference as anticipating all of the elements of these claims. Daudelin teaches a directory assistance system for wireline telephones that automatically connects calls between the requested party and the caller. In the case of standard listings, all subscribers' numbers are divulged to the caller with the option for connection. Daudelin also teaches special circumstances where unlisted numbers may be connected in the event of an emergency, with operator assistance, with the number of the called party not being disclosed to the caller or the operator.

Thus, in the case of listed numbers, Daudelin teaches the the number is always disclosed. And, in the case of unlisted numbers Daudelin only connects during a special operator assisted manner.

However, the Daudelin reference does not teach or suggest all of the elements of the present invention as claimed in independent claims 63 or 158. For example, there is no teaching or suggestion in Daudelin that discloses a listing database configured to store information corresponding to each of the subscribers, including a field containing wireless phone numbers and a connect field that stores information instructing said communication assistance system as to whether to mask the subscriber's wireless phone number to the requester, such that during a process that the requester is being connected to a desired subscriber, the connect field is examined to determine whether to disclose the subscriber's wireless phone number to the requester.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of

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independent claims 63 and 158 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 be withdrawn. Also, as claims 65 - 67 depend from independent claim 63, Applicants respectfully request that these claims be allowed for at least the same reasons.

**35 U.S.C. § 103 Claim 173 and as amended 63 and 158**

Applicants note that in paragraph 23 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected independent claim 173 as being obvious over Daudelin in view of Zellner.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that Daudelin teaches all of the elements of claim 173 except for the storage of and masking of wireless telephone numbers of the subscriber but relies on the Zellner reference to show such elements to form the basis for the rejection.

Applicants begin by noting that the Zellner reference was first filed on December 19, 2000. The present invention, although filed in the U.S. as a national stage application on February 15, 2002, ultimately claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/179,166, filed on January 31, 2000, before the filing date of Zellner reference.

Applicants note that the '166 priority application fully supports the elements of maintaining wireless subscriber numbers for connecting requesters to those numbers and also fully supports the option that the wireless number of the subscriber may remain masked to the requester during connection.

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Although such support is found throughout the entire '166 application, for exemplary purposes, particular attention is drawn to page 13, lines 12-19 of the '166 priority application which states:

"The record in database 18 or 24 associated with wireless apparatus 6 can optionally be provided with a field which indicates to operator terminal 20 *whether or not an operator is permitted to disclose the identification number to requester 4*. This ensures that the identification number of communication apparatus 6 remains confidential if the corresponding subscriber so wishes." (emphasis added)

Regardless of the status of the Zellner reference however, the cited prior art, does not teach or suggest the present invention as claimed. Applicants note that in claim 173, as well as amended claims 63 and 158, the system includes the arrangement that during the process of making a connection to the requested number, it determines whether the number can be disclosed to the requester.

No such analogous teachings are contained in either the Zellner reference or the Daudelin reference. As noted above Daudelin does not teach or suggest the element, that during a process that the requester is being connected to a desired subscriber, the connect field is examined to determine whether to disclose the subscriber's wireless phone number to the requester.

Likewise, the Zellner reference discusses an arrangement where the information is being withheld in connection with online advertiser data requests. It is not related to masking a subscriber wireless telephone number to a requester when connecting that

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requester to the desired subscriber wireless number. There is no suggestion for the feature that during a process that the requester is being connected to a desired subscriber, the connect field is examined to determine whether to disclose the subscriber's wireless phone number to the requester. Thus even if the Zellner reference did qualify as prior art, there would be no teaching or suggestion to combine the two references. And, even if combined, the resulting system would still not teach all of the elements of the present invention as claimed in claims 63, 158 and 173.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection of independent claim 173 be withdrawn. Additionally, as claims 69-75 (currently rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Dadelin in view of McMullen) depend from independent claim 63 and as claim 174 depends from independent claim 173, these claims should be allowed at least for the same reasons.

#### **New Claim 180**

In the present application, Applicants have added new claim 180 which is deemed allowable in view of the foregoing.

#### **35 U.S.C. § 103 Claims 133 and 165**

Turning to the rejection of independent claims 133 and 165, the Examiner has rejected these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Daudelin in view of



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Fukuzawa. The Examiner states that Daudelin teaches all of the elements of the claims except for an access database with an access code related to each of the subscriber's phone listings. However, the Examiner states that Fukuzawa teaches such an element, and that the combination of the reference renders claims 133 and 165 obvious. Applicants disagree with the Examiner's contentions and submit the following remarks in response.

The present invention as claimed in independent claim 133 is directed to a communication assistance system for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers. The system has a telephone switch for receiving calls from a plurality of requesters desiring to access said information corresponding to subscribers. A first database stores the information corresponding to each of the subscribers, including phone numbers of each of the subscribers.

A communications interface receives requests for directory assistance via a requester communication terminal. An access database contains a plurality of access numbers corresponding to phone listing of each one of the subscribers stored in the first database, where the communications interface is further configured to deliver the access number corresponding to the requested phone listing to the requester communication terminal so as to provide the assigned access number, allowing the requester to connect to a desired subscriber using the assigned access number. Independent method claim 165 contains elements relating to features described above in reference to claim 133.

In this arrangement the requester requests a desired subscriber listing from the

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directory assistance system. The system, rather than delivering the number of the subscriber sends an access code to the requester's communication terminal. The requester can then use this access code allowing the directory assistance system to connect the requester to the subscriber, without divulging the subscriber's telephone number to the requester. Such an arrangement is contrary to prior art systems for directory assistance.

In the rejection the Examiner relies principally on the Daudelin reference but notes that Daudelin does not disclose an access code or access code database, and instead relies on the Fukuzawa reference in that respect to form the rejection.

The Fukuzawa reference teaches a virtual telephone number device for individuals who must publicize their telephone for one reason or another, such as for public auctions, but does not wish to use their permanent telephone number. In Fukuzawa, the first subscriber contacts the system and obtains a temporary virtual number. The first subscriber then uses this temporary number to post in public spaces, where it is obtained by a second subscriber as noted in lines 51-55 in column 3 of Fukuzawa. When the caller (second subscriber) calls the virtual number, the call is directed to the system where the virtual dialed number is directed to the system and is correlated with the first subscriber's actual telephone number. After being correlated, the call from the caller is forwarded to the first subscriber at their regular telephone number for completion.

Applicants submit that the present invention is not taught or suggested by the combined references Daudelin and Fukuzawa. For example, Applicants note that there is no

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teaching or suggestion in Fukuzawa, or in Daudelin that discloses the delivery of an access number to a requester in response to a request to a directory assistance system. As noted above, Fukuzawa, relied on by the Examiner to show this element, makes no mention of *delivering an access code to a requester*, as there is no need to do so. Rather, Fukuzawa teaches directly away from such a delivery of the access code, indicating that the subscribers themselves are responsible for disseminating their virtual number. At no point does the virtual number system deliver anything to the calling party.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art references Daudelin and Fukuzawa do not, either alone or in combination with one another, teach or suggest all of the elements of the present invention as claimed. As such, Applicants request that the rejection of claims 133 and 168 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn. Also, as claims 134-136 and 138-140 depend from claim 133 they should be allowed for at least the same reason.

**35 U.S.C. § 102 and 103 Claim 178**

Turning to the rejection of independent claim 178, the Examiner originally rejected independent claim 178 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Daudelin. Applicants however, have amended the subject matter of dependent claim 179 into independent claim 178. As such, Applicants treat the rejection of independent claim 178 according to the Examiner's comments regarding the scope of the original dependent claim

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179.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claim 179 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Daudelin in view of Zellner. The Examiner states that Daudelin teaches all of the elements of the claims except for the non-voice format communications between the requester and the customer service representative. However, the Examiner states that Zellner teaches such an element, and that the combination of the references renders claim 179 obvious. Applicants disagree with the Examiner's contentions and submit the following remarks in response.

As amended, independent claim 178 teaches a method for providing access to information corresponding to a plurality of subscribers in a communication assistance system. The method includes receiving requests from a plurality of requesters desiring to access the information corresponding to subscribers. A first database stores the information corresponding to each of the subscribers, including phone numbers of each of the subscribers.

Each of the requests are routed to a call center coupled to the switch from the requester to an operator terminal. The requests are provided from the requester in a format desired by the requester, where the format includes either a voice call connection format or a non-voice format. When communicating in a non-voice format, the communicating between a requester and a customer service representative operating the operator terminal, is conducted in a variety of formats selected from a list including short messaging service (SMS), wireless application protocol (WAP), live chat, and instant messaging.

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In this arrangement, the present invention allows a requester an option to communicate with a customer service representative at an operator terminal in either a voice or non-voice format.

Such an element is supported in the specification. It is evident from the entire specification that communications between the requester and the CSR may be performed in a voice format. The additional choice of using a non-voice format is supported on page 19, lines 10-13 of the specification (PCT publication version) which states;

"In an alternative embodiment of this invention it is contemplated that a requester 4 may interact with an agent using a non-voice method such as, but not limited to: SMS (Short Message Service), Wireless Application Protocol (WAP), Live Chat, and Instant Messaging as will be discussed below."

Applicants submit that the cited prior art, either alone or in combination with one another, fails to teach or suggest the present invention as claimed. As noted by the Examiner, Daudelin does not teach non-voice communications between the operator terminal and the delivery of a requested subscriber listing by non-voice formats included in the claim.

However, neither of the cited references, either alone or in combination with one another teach or suggest all of the elements of claim 178. For example, there is no teaching or suggestion in either Daudelin or in Zellner that discloses a directory assistance system for providing the requests from the requester in a format desired by the requester, where the format includes either a voice call connection format or a non-voice format.

As such, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent claim

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178 be withdrawn.

**Conclusion**

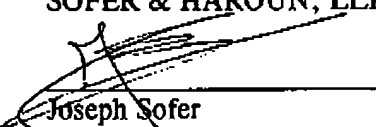
In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are currently in condition for allowance, the earliest possible notice of which is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner feels that an additional telephone interview would advance the prosecution of this application they are invited to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted

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